

Dark Days : Only The Beginning

Episode 1

**PROMO W/
ADVERTS**

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CHAPTER ONE: The Introduction

As I walk through the crowded city streets of the Eastern American land searching for my beloved (Nissa) I could not help but contemplate the chain of events which culminated in forcing my decision to leave my village over a year ago. As my thoughts wander I stopped in front of a large mirrored building, staring into the reflection, while pondering on what might be coming next. The more I focused the less clear the people in the background became until they were little more than a blur.

It was at this point, while lost in thought, I saw him. At first he looked as though he was a vague depiction of someone who once haunted my dreams, always watching, standing in the midst of the crowded city sidewalk. As my focus shifted from what was coming to what was before me he became more clear and it was indeed the mysterious man I seen lurking in my subconscious. He stood there, just staring at me with red eyes surrounded by a black sclera. As he became more clear I noticed that not a single person walking by him alongside the bustling city streets noticed his presence. I hastefully turned around to finally get a glimpse of this mysterious man in person but to no avail.

Having seen what I saw I knew it was time I made my way back home to Noriga. I wave for a taxi, telling them to hurry to the docks as I quickly jump into the vehicle. Upon arriving at the docks I rush out of the taxi, reaching in my pocket. The cabby yells "*What about my fa....*" but before he could finish I grab all the money I had left from my earning in the western world informing the driver "*Thanks, keep the change.*"; only receiving a look of shock from the cabby in reply. Rushing pass the ships docked in the port I could not help but notice a strange one that stood out. Its body was rough, as if having spent decades at sea, bearing the name "Through the Gate" while its sails remain pristine as if having never seen so much as a gust of wind. Having no time to waste on trivial, though unsettling, ships at the docks I hastefully make my way to my boat (Endurance) and begin to row back to Noriga.

Nearing the islands, the insignia upon my boat began to glow allowing me to see through the veil separating the rest of the world from us. As the veil opened I could not believe my eyes. What was once a beautiful place was now that of nightmares. The sea raged, colored in blood, as the sky hid behind a fleece of black clouds which were as dark as an abyss. After completely piercing the veil and syncing my senses with our world I could hear the wind howl as if though it itself was screaming out in pain, and the sky rawr with the relentless boom of lighting surging through the air.

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Having finally made it to the coastline I fell in exhaustion. After a few seconds, I noticed that despite the storm raging on off at the distance it was eerily silent on the beach. Collecting myself from the long journey back home, and the bizarre experience I just had which defied any logic or science known by me, I began heading to my village over the hills of Mount Cheyneen. I was just hoping I was not too late.

On my way to the inner sanctity of Mount Cheyneen I could not help but wonder what could cause this, could it actually be the same monsters who tried to ravage our land before. With no time to concern myself with the who I quickened my pace. I neared the peak when I noticed a blood-stained picture laying face down. Between the streaks of blood I could read "To: Nissa - From: Troy...I will always be there for you as you were for me." in ink and to the bottom right "Ha Ha!" was written in blood. Flipping it over it was a photo of me and Nissa, one in fact that I gave her the last time I saw her before she was taken.

This confirming it had to be the same demons as before. Feeling the same unbearable anger as when she was first taken, I let out "*Awwweeee, not again damn it! Not this fucking time!!*" and ran up the hill as quickly as I could. Reaching the peak was the moment I had seen it for the first time, the most horrific sight possible. My entire village was left in ruins; the sight of smoke rising from burning buildings, blood flowing throughout the inner sanctity like as if they were newly formed rivers, the sounds of screams, howls and cackling laughter only manageable by the beasts fought the day Nissa was taken. Standing here, bearing witness to the suffering, I knew that the coming days were going to be the darkest I've ever faced, and that this was only the beginning.

CHAPTER TWO: Demonic Encounters

After I recollected myself I began sliding down the rocky hill of Cheyneen. I made it over the brittle rocks and protruding roots, under broken branches and pass the hanging vines. On my way down I saw a beast that looked like a man with the hide and lower body of a serpent. I had hoped they would not see me while I neared the bottom but my luck was no better than the buildings below. Three of the creatures spotted me and started to head my way but when I reached the bottom they stopped in their tracks. With blood filled eyes one of them hissed "*No farther! He's the Rancecs meal now.*".

While the demons turned around to head back to the wooded section of Cheyneen, I wondered what about these "Rancec" demons could make the beasts chasing me retreat like they had? Heeding the words spoken by the demon snake I slowly walked through the wedge between two houses in front of me. As I got closer to the front of the two houses I could hear loud crunches and inaudible groaning. Once I reached the end of the walls I pressed myself up against the wall to my left and peaked around the corner.

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That's when I had seen it, the reason why the demonic serpents that chased me would not follow me into the village. There before me stood two monsters with patches of black charred flesh, darkened tissue where their flesh had appeared to be burnt off and eyes as black as the clouds were. They had just killed two of the villagers whom I would often see searching the beaches for ideas and items to help the villagers of Usregon. One of the Rancecs started feeding on the kill it had just made while the other traced its fingernail around its victim's face; as if to take in the moment.

As I watched a little longer the demon finished tracing its fingernail then almost immediately ripped the man's face off and started stretching it on to its own face. When it had finished what it was doing it took its fingernail and started tracing around the edges of the man's flesh again, except this time upon his own face. As the Rancec did this it somehow seemed to be burning the man's face onto its own flesh. I quickly pulled myself back behind the corner just as it finished, concerned if I watched too much

longer I might be spotted. The demon turned its gaze my way just after I left its view and stared for a moment.

I knew I would never make it through a fight with these monsters since all I had left from my journey home was some light food, one single use medkit and my dagger. With this being the fact it was clear to me that keeping to the shadows by sneaking through the houses and huts would be my best bet for survival. I started back through between the two houses until I found a window.

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Having arrived in town near the north-east side my best bet to get to the family's home was to go south-east and follow the curve. With my path figured out I climbed through the window and started on my way to find them all. As I was going through the first house I could not help but think how there were only two walls and about sixteen feet between me and the Rancec demons that were feeding right out front.

As I finished passing through one house and began into the next one I caught another glimpse of the Rancecs. I stood there a moment watching one of the Rancecs as it started to fight with the other for what seemed to be the face it burned onto itself. They started to growl and snarl at one another but soon after the one without a human face submitted, carrying on with eating the villager that was earlier killed. Having seen enough of the monsters I quickly went through the window of the next house.

This time as I passed through I had found bodies lying on the floor. Hoping to find some survivors I checked them for a pulse but could not find one. Looking over their bodies I seen that one of them was holding a double use medkit. Knowing I would be needing everything I can find to make it out of this alive I took the medkit and put it in my small cylinder backpack next to my P.D.A and the other medkit I had. After giving a moment for the souls lost I continued on.

I began to look for a window to climb back out of the other end of the house when unfortunately I noticed the only window on that side was one on the second floor. I peeked through the window to see what fate was awaiting me outside. There standing in a large field between me and the last house before I reached my family's home was two of the demons like the ones on the hill. They stood there looking for something to eat when one of them spotted a body lying in some high grass. As the devilish demons

ate their meal I hopped out of the window and down along the side of the porch roof. I managed to keep out of the serpents view by staying behind objects such as the occasional tree or bush and dashing for the next one.

As I climbed in the window of the last house I noticed that there was fresh blood not even completely dry leading to the basement under the stairs. I walked towards the stairway preparing myself incase another one of the strange demons roaming around is still in the basement. It was just as I thought, when I opened the door and peeked around the frame....there was a demon. It appeared to be a Rancec in the middle of burning a villager's face onto itself. I noticed a map of the island with a small red x standing on a shelf next to the demon. Deciding that if I am going to try for the map I should do so while there was only one beast around. I slowly rushed in while it was still trying to burn the villager's face to its own.

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Sneaking up behind it I pulled out my dagger from its sheath on my side. As it noticed someone was coming down the stairs I jumped from the last few steps, stabbing it in the right side of the neck before the Rancec managed to turn around. It started to stagger back into a wall behind it, knocking me off it. It then turned around to lunge at me for an attack, half the human's face still not attached. It managed to strike my right side as it passed by but luckily I was able to slide the blade of my dagger across the monster's right side as well when it attacked me.

Immediately after it passed me I went in for the final blow. While it was still recovering from the attack it made against me, I took my dagger and plunged it into the demon's back; running the blade up against its spine. Suddenly it fell, and shortly after it stopped breathing the Rancec turned to ash, leaving only a piece of its fingernail behind. After I finished fighting the Rancec, killing it, I grabbed the demon's nail and the marked map putting it all in my bag. I placed the map under my medkits and the demon's nail in the front left side pocket found inside the bag.

I made my way back up the stairs and once I was out of the basement I grabbed my single use medkit to start treating my wound. I used the needle and thread in the kit to close my wound, then the peroxide to clean it and bandage wrap to cover it. Using the pain relievers while rowing through the storm I was down one medkit. With only one

double use medkit left I figured I should avoid any more encounters unless I absolutely needed to fight.

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While still catching my breath I grabbed out the map I had just found to see what it might lead to. Written on the back of it was "I forgot where it lays but remember the place it strays. Down this line is where it's found, under the mark is but a sound. Follow the stream and only then will the prize that has been forgotten be seen.". Not sure what to make of it I turned it over and looked at where the red x is marked. It seemed to mark a stream coming from the ocean and flowing through the woods leading to the statue of the sixth gate guardians near the center of the island. Seeing that it would still be a while until I could uncover the secrets of this map I chose to place it back into my backpack to continue on with finding my family.

CHAPTER THREE: A Family Reunion

Out the last window I went, off to hopefully find my family. As I approached I could see the family home torn apart and in some spots still on fire. Just as I approached the front right corner of the house I peeked around and seen a large hole with jagged edges that appeared to be made by a group of demons. When I reached the hole in the wall I got into an offensive crouched position, peeking around the corner. There I saw my little brother (Tripack) bleeding and lying in my older brother's (Korje) left arm while he sat in the middle of the house holding a sawed-off shotgun in his right hand.

I still remember the panic that Korje was in. Him being hurt himself he left his right leg out while crossing his left leg under his right knee. I rushed up to them when Korje aimed the shotgun at me. I stopped and looked straight at him when he said "*Troy...Is that really you Troy?!? What are you doing back?*" Hearing the doubt in his voice, and understandable after everything, I told him "*Yeah bra, it's me. I was thinking about everything that had happened over the past year when I saw a man that reminded me of the feelings I get here on the island. With the old feelings returning to me while I was away from here I felt it was time for me to leave the western land and return home. Where are the others at?*".

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Having given my brother Korje enough information for him to relax and trust who I was he started to tell me about everything that happened in Usregon. He started with telling me about what everyone was doing before the event that led to the island's current state. He said *"Many of the islanders were off at sea fishing for food though there were still a few fishing boats on shore getting ready to set sail. Mom was out talking to old man Usregon with Sirtes. While mom and our sister (Sirtes) were at old man Usregon's cliff side hut by the beach me and Tripack were out in the woods within the hills of Cheyennee hunting and gathering. After we caught some food and gathered some fruit we set off back to the village. When we got out of the woods the ground started to shake and suddenly the sky went black with dark clouds and Cubores began to spit ash. We went rushing to old man Usregon's hut to check on mom and Sirtes when out came a swarm of...what I can only call demons flowing down the top of the volcano."*

Taken a brief moment to reflect on the reality of everything he continued on with his story of the events that happened, saying *"The boats at sea somehow left through the rift. The boats remaining on shore got as many people on board before they had too set off for the rift. Me and Tripack were forced to head back to our mother's house since there were too many creatures coming down Cubores. After we finally got back a group of demons with burnt flesh and sharp claws came through the wall attacking us. We managed to cut their numbers down to two when they fled but by that time they had already got to Tripack pretty bad and one got to my right leg while it was on the floor after being shot in the stomach. We have been here since just trying to hold out."*

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In complete astonishment of the tale he told me I stood contemplating my next response. After a couple seconds I asked him *"How many would you say is out there?"*. Korje paused and replied *"I could not tell you a real number but I can say it seemed like there were thousands of them if not hundred of thousands of them. Lucky enough for the villagers on the other end of the island, most of the creatures stayed near the base of the volcano. You are not thinking what I think you are...are you Troy?"* baring a knowing yet concerned face. Even though he already knew the answer I replied anyway

by saying *"Yeah, you know I can never just sit back here if I can do anything to help stop this. I figured my best bet is to get over Cheyneen again then take the beach to old man Usregon's hut."*

Korje knew that I was going to go find our mother and sister no matter what so he merely said *"Here Bra, look I know there is no talking you out of this so take Tripacks machete since he will not be able to use it for a while."* while handing me his machete with a blood covered blade. I looked at it a moment then I looked back up at my brother to tell him *"Thanks bra, this will really come in handy while I look for them. Before I leave I want to give you and Tripack something too."* I kneeled, placing my cylinder bag down, reaching for the double use medkit I still had not used yet. I handed it to Korje saying *"Here, this should help you with your leg and keep Tripack from getting any worse."* Korje looked the med pack then me and said *"I'll take one for Tripak but keep the other one for you, you're going to need it. I will be fine without it; it's just a flesh wound."*

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Even with the offer being declined I could not leave them there with just one set from the medkit so I told him *"You know you might need this to survive too. If you don't want to take it for yourself then take it for Tripack incase he gets any worse."*, Korje cracked a grin and responded with *"Ha...you always did know how to make an argument didn't you. Ok then, thank you bra and I hope the fates will be with you."* With that, he took the medkit from me and placed it next to him.

I turned and walked back out the hole but before going through I knew I would have to let go of any hate or clouded thoughts if there was going to be any chance of me making it to old man Usregon's beach side hut. With this knowledge I stood there taking in a deep breath while lifting the machete in my right hand from my side crossed over to my left shoulder. I swung the blade letting everything go from my mind and giving a light rawr when exhaling. It was time, time to talk to old man Usregon and get to the truth as to why this all has happened, and just maybe also learn why I was warned about the onslaught like I was in the first place.

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